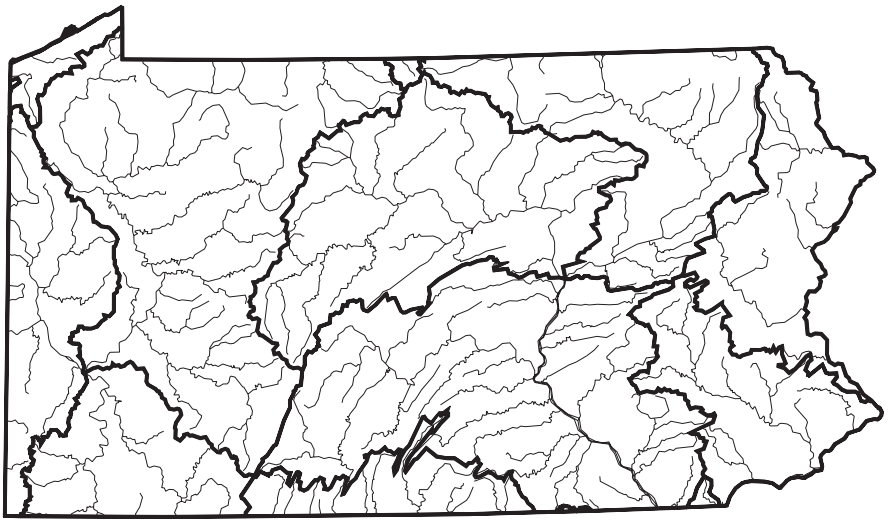
Pennsylvania



Basin Boundaries
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the Pennsylvania 1996 305(b) report, contact:

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Surface Water Quality

Over 81% of the surveyed river miles have good water quality that fully supports aquatic life uses and swimming. The most widespread pollutants impairing the remaining miles are metals, which impact over 2,107 miles. Other pollutants include suspended solids, nutrients, and acidity.

Abandoned mine drainage is the most significant source of surface water quality degradation. Drainage from abandoned mining sites pollutes at least 2,417 miles of streams, 54% of all degraded streams. Other sources of degradation include agriculture, industrial point sources, and municipal sewage treatment plants.

Pennsylvania has issued fish consumption advisories on 21 waterbodies. Most of the advisories are due to elevated concentrations of PCBs and chlordane in fish tissue, but two advisories have been issued for mirex and one for mercury.

Zebra mussels are present in Pennsylvania in Lake Erie and the immediate vicinity, as well as the lower Monongahela, lower Allegheny, and upper Ohio rivers. There are about 175 publicly and privately run zebra mussel sampling sites statewide.

Ground Water Quality

Major sources of ground water contamination include leaking underground storage tanks, containers from hazardous materials facilities, and improper handling or overuse of fertilizer. Petroleum and petroleum byproducts are the most common pollutants in ground water. Coal mining and oil and gas production have also elevated concentrations of several elements (including chlorides, iron, barium, and strontium) in some regions. Pennsylvania is currently developing a Comprehensive State Ground Water Protection Program (CSGWPP). The CSGWPP provides a mechanism whereby Pennsylvania and EPA can work together to develop a comprehensive and consistent statewide approach to ground water quality protection. Pennsylvania and EPA will use the CSGWPP to focus on a long-term process for improving existing State and Federal ground water programs. In addition,

Pennsylvania's Ground Water Quality Protection Strategy is currently being reviewed for consistency with the Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act of 1995.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

Eliminating acid mine drainage from abandoned mines will require up to $5 billion. The cost, difficulty, magnitude, and extent of the problem have hampered progress. To date, the Commonwealth has funded studies to determine the effectiveness of alternative techniques for treating mine drainage and preventing contamination. The U.S. Office of Surface Mining and EPA Region III have created the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative to address water quality problems associated with mine drainage in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. It is hoped that this initiative will involve private organizations and local citizens, as well as government agencies, in moving toward solutions.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

The Water Quality Network monitors chemical and physical parameters almost monthly and biological parameters annually at 153 fixed stations on rivers, streams, and Lake Erie. The Commonwealth also conducts ambient ground water monitoring at 537 monitoring sites.

Individual Use Support in Pennsylvania

Designated Use[a]	Total Miles Surveyed	Percent Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Fair (Partially Supporting)	Poor (Not Supporting)	Poor (Not Attainable)
Rivers and Streams (Total Miles = 53,962)[b]						
	24,482	82	-	8	11	0
	24,482	82	-	8	11	0
	24,482	82	-	8	11	0
Lakes (Total Acres = 161,445)						
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-

– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

[a] A subset of Pennsylvania's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the State's 305(b) report for a full description of the State's uses.

[b] Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.